

The Old Stone Wall

E-Newsletter of the NH Division of Historical Resources

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IN THIS ISSUE

[Cotton Storehouse: Tax incentive success story](#)

[Five properties added to the N.H. State Register of Historic Places](#)

["DHR Dig Days" celebrates New Hampshire preservation months](#)

[Beech Hill School attends Project Archaeology](#)

[DHR offers CAMP training for Historic District Commission members](#)

[State Library's N.H. Talking Books Services division wins national award](#)

[Learn more about preservation programs](#)

Cotton Storehouse: Tax incentive success story



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Recently renovated Cotton Storehouse, Nashua NH

On the last Wednesday of June, Stabile Companies officially cut the ribbon on their newest housing development in Nashua, the adaptive reuse of the 100 year old National Register-listed North Cotton Storehouse. The storehouse, part of the Nashua Manufacturing Company Historic District and the only building in that district constructed on the north side of the Nashua River, is a large eight-story building with more than 280 multi-pane hopper windows on its front and back facades. Located at a bend in the river, "The Apartments at Cotton Mill" now provides 109 new housing units with a mix of studio, one- and two-bedroom apartments with excellent views of downtown Nashua and up and down the Nashua River.

This successful and attractive reuse almost didn't happen. In 2007, the storehouse was slated to be demolished for new development. Cotton warehouses and storehouses, once prevalent across New Hampshire, have become increasingly rare, in part due to their reputation as being difficult to rehabilitate. Design details that originally made for good storage space, including heavy timber construction, low ceilings and small windows, present difficult redevelopment challenges. Luckily, demolition delays, the developer's creativity and the federal preservation tax incentive program worked to save this historic building from being destroyed.

Rehabilitation became a feasible option when the developer applied for the 20 percent federal tax credit. This program, administered in New Hampshire by the Division of Historical Resources, requires all work to be reviewed by the DHR and approved by the National Park Service as meeting the [Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation](#). Consultation with the DHR began in 2008 and it soon became clear that the windows were the greatest design challenge. The final solution, a collaborative effort of creativity and compromise, includes alterations to only two of the columns of windows on the

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primary façade and a creative floor plan that places the majority of the living rooms in each apartment close to the larger windows. The result allows for attractive riverfront apartments in what was previously an empty building.

The federal preservation tax incentive program is a useful yet underutilized tool in New Hampshire redevelopment. Current tax credit projects in the state include properties that range from Nashua to Berlin and represent more than \$50 million of investment in the rehabilitation of historic buildings. For more information on the federal tax incentive program in New Hampshire, email Peter Michaud at peter.michaud@dcr.nh.gov.

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The DHR is a state resource agency, supported by the State of New Hampshire, by the federal Historic Preservation Fund (through a matching grant administered by the National Park Service of the US Department of the Interior), and by donated funds and services. In addition to its state functions, the DHR is also responsible for administering the federal

preservation program in New Hampshire.

Five properties added to the N.H. State Register of Historic Places

The New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources is pleased to announce that the State Historical Resources Council has added five properties to the New Hampshire State Register of Historic Places.



Freedom Town Hall

Farmed for more than 225 years, the **John Prescott Chase Farm in Epping** now operates as a community-supported agriculture farm, or CSA. Its simple Georgian-style farm house has accommodated the owners' changing needs across generations, making Chase Farm a living model of Epping's agricultural history from approximately 1785 to the present.

Built specifically as a town hall in the Greek Revival style in 1889, **Freedom Town Hall** continues to serve that function. In keeping with the New Hampshire tradition of a primary town building serving as a community center as well as the seat of town government, Freedom Town Hall also has a stage and kitchen, making it useful as a center for social activities of all kinds.

A locally significant brick building in the tradition of the Upper Connecticut River Valley, the **Union House Taven in Haverhill** served as a tavern and stagecoach stop for most of the 19th century. Associated with the early settlement of Haverhill, the property has also been a farm for much of its history.

The **Huse House in Manchester** was constructed circa 1809. The building was purchased by Captain Isaac Huse Jr. in 1844, who updated it from a Federal residence to a Greek Revival-style farm house. A farm for most of its history, the property has also served as a library, post office, store and tavern.

The **Baker Homestead in New Boston** currently exists as a Georgian-style house with an attached shed and barn. This adapted structure, modified since the original building frame was completed on this lot in 1756, represents the evolution of farmhouses and farming practices in New Boston across more than two centuries.

Anyone wishing to nominate a property to the [New Hampshire State Register of Historic Places](http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr) must research the history of the nominated property and document it fully on an individual inventory form from the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources. Having a property listed in the Register does not impose restrictions on property owners. For more information, visit www.nh.gov/nhdhr.

"DHR Dig Days" celebrates New Hampshire preservation months

To celebrate Archaeology Month and Preservation Month 2014, this spring the DHR embarked on a multidisciplinary investigation into the history of our building at 19 Pillsbury Street, the last remaining building of the Margaret Pillsbury General Hospital complex that opened in Concord's South End in 1891. Culminating with "**DHR Dig Days**" on April 30 and May 2, the project gave DHR staff members the opportunity to utilize our research to understand the historical development of the neighborhood and to educate the public about historic preservation and the DHR's services.



"DHR Dig Days" at 19 Pillsbury Street

Prior to Dig Days, the DHR compiled a history of 19 Pillsbury Street within the context of the

hospital and Concord's South End, drawing on sources such as Sanborn Fire Insurance maps and the archives at Concord Hospital (the successor to the Margaret Pillsbury General Hospital). The work revealed that our building opened in 1928 as an annex to the main hospital facility, following a major fundraising campaign. This upgrade was necessary in order to accommodate changing needs and expectations of hospital staff and patients. When the annex was built, it was connected to the main hospital by a two-story brick solarium "connector."

For the Preservation Lab held during Dig Days, DHR archaeologists investigated whether physical evidence of this long-gone connector could be found hidden underground. A rotating crew of DHR staff members, visitors and [State Conservation and Rescue Archaeology Program \(SCRAP\)](#) volunteers participated in the multi-day event on the lawn of 19 Pillsbury Street, sharing the history of the property compiled to date and demonstrating archaeological field techniques.

Undeterred by damp and drizzly weather, DHR staff and SCRAP volunteers set up informational display tents outside of the building and began to dig a 2-meter by 1-meter excavation trench in the area where research indicated the remains of the connector would be recovered. By the end of the first day we had encountered soils containing large quantities of brick, mortar and slag/cinder; rebar encased in concrete, and what appeared to be the concrete footing for the connector. Other materials recovered from the upper levels of the excavation unit included a variety of demolition debris: wire, nails, mortar, window glass, roof slate and coal. On the second day, more SCRAP members arrived to help and the excavation continued. As we went deeper, we encountered a wider variety of materials from the trench, including ceramics, window glass, several glass vial fragments, bricks, nails and bone.

Visitors to Dig Days included former patients who shared their own Margaret Pillsbury Hospital memories, school children who got to participate in the dig, and South End neighbors who learned more about their community and the programs and services of the DHR.

"DHR Dig Days" was deemed a great success by participants and visitors alike. The DHR plans to display both the results of the research and images of the artifacts collected in an online exhibit.

For a short video on "DHR Dig Days," click [here](#). For more information on DHR programs, visit <http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/>.

Beech Hill School attends Project Archaeology

This spring, middle school students from The Beech Hill School in Hopkinton were given the opportunity to study archaeology both in and outside of the classroom. Using Project Archaeology's Investigation Shelter curriculum as a guide and with assistance from DHR archaeologists, students combined social studies, math, history and science to learn the basic principles of archaeology. Toward the end of the class they utilized their new skills to systematically identify and record a post-contact archaeological site within their community.



Beech Hill School students map a cellar hole

[Project Archaeology](http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr) is a comprehensive education program dedicated to teaching scientific and historical inquiry, cultural understanding, and the importance of protecting our nation's rich cultural resources. To learn more about Project Archaeology, visit <http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr> and click on **Project Archaeology** in the quick links.

DHR offers CAMP training for Historic District Commission members

The DHR, in association with Keene's Historic District Commission and Planning Department, is pleased to be hosting a **Commission Assistance and Mentoring Program (CAMP) training** for Historic District Commission members on **September 19, 2014**. CAMP training is provided by the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions, using professional speakers and trainers. Topics will include legal issues, procedural standards, design guidelines and review, and public engagement. Attendance is free to Historic District Commission members, with priority registration for members from Certified Local Government communities. Members will need to provide their commission's ordinance and design guidelines to the DHR for use by the training staff.

Space is limited to one or two commission members per community. Early registration is

encouraged. For more information or to sign up, please contact preservation@dcr.nh.gov or 603-271-3483.

State Library's N.H. Talking Books Services wins national award

News from the New Hampshire Department of Cultural Resources ...

The [New Hampshire State Library's Talking Books Services](#) has been named the **2013 Network Library of the Year** by the Library of Congress' National Library Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped section.

Part of the N.H. State Library, Talking Books provides recorded books and magazines as well as the special audio players needed to use them, at no charge, to residents with visual limitations or who are unable to handle printed reading materials. In 2013, N.H. Talking Books Services became one of the first libraries in the country to circulate digital magazine cartridges. Later that year, it began offering its patrons service via the BARD app, which allows readers to download audio and braille books to their iPhone, iPad or iPod touch.

In recognition of this achievement, Gov. Maggie Hassan issued a proclamation naming June 23-29, 2014 "New Hampshire Talking Books Week."

"Public libraries are truly one of the cornerstones of our communities and our democracy, offering a world of information to citizens and requiring only a thirst for knowledge to gain access," Gov. Maggie Hassan said. "I thank New Hampshire Talking Books for its outstanding work to build on New Hampshire's longstanding tradition of inclusiveness and strengthen our communities and our state."

Learn more about preservation programs

To learn more about historic preservation programs and activities on the horizon, visit the [News and Events](#) web page of the NH Division of Historical Resources, the [NH Preservation Alliance Events web site](#), the [Association of Historical Societies of New Hampshire E-ssociate](#), and the "history" section of nh365.org. Also visit PreservationDirectory.com, a national portal with links to a wide and expanding range of preservation events, sources and resources.

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